

Good morning Chairman and members of the House Administration. My name is Tom Stockton and I reside at 1430 Boston Road Helena MT.

I am here today to oppose HB 88 for allowing youth under the age of 18 to be election judges. I have been an election judge for the past 15 years and chief election judge for the last 10. I usually preside over 3 precincts here in Lewis and Clark County.

I believe it is a mistake to allow youth, who are not qualified registered voters, to preside over a process where the voters are required to be qualified registered voters. During the voting process, it is our responsibility as election judges, to ensure the integrity of the entire process from the time a voter enters the voting station until all the votes are tallied.. I am not saying the youth under the age of 18 do not have integrity, but allowing them to preside in a position of authority over this process would cast a doubt over the integrity of the entire process.

At the end of the election all the of the election judges sign several legal documents certifying that all the laws and regulations for voting were place were followed during the election day. I am not sure that a youth under the age of 18 can sign and certify these documents.

In my precincts we celebrate when a voter is allowed to vote for the first time. We feel it part of our responsibility to let the qualified registered voter to know that it is a privilege and respnsibility to vote when you turn 18. To allow youth who is under the age of 18 to be an election judge seems to cheapen this expectation of voting for the first time. If youth and their parents want to be involved in the election process, there are many other methods to be involved in elections and election campaigns.

Under the Help America Vote Act Title V, each state is encouraged (and can apply for financial assistance) to engage with college age students, who are qualified votes, to work during the election. It would seem to me the Secretary of State should use her office and position to work with college age students, who are already qualified voters.

Thank you for taking the time to come to Helena and engage in this process, Please oppose HB88 to ensure the integrity of the election process that elected you to be here and represent us.